CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
providing a plurality of operating systems on a single information handling device, the plurality of operating systems including an appliance operating system to control the information handling device to operate an appliance, and a general operating system to perform general information handling tasks;
executing the appliance operating system to control an appliance, wherein the appliance operating system is independent of the general operating system; and
executing the general operating system to control the information handling device to perform general information handling tasks.

2. The method as in Claim 1, further including switching between operating systems.

3. The method as in Claim 2, wherein switching includes discontinuing the execution of one operating system prior to executing another operating system.

4. The method as in Claim 2, wherein switching includes executing two or more of the plurality of operating systems concurrently.

5. The method as in Claim 1, wherein:
executing the appliance operating system includes reading the appliance operating system from a non-volatile memory circuit; and
executing the general operating system includes reading the general operating system from a mass storage device.

6. The method as in Claim 1, wherein executing includes checking for resource conflicts.

7. An information handling system comprising:
a data processor;
a bios to provide initial processor control;
a memory coupled to said processor;
a communications interface; and
a plurality of operating systems to be executed by said processor, said plurality of operating systems including:
a general operating system capable of performing general information handling tasks; and
an appliance operating system capable of controlling, through said communications interface, at least one appliance, wherein said appliance operating system is independent of said general operating system.

8. The system as in Claim 7, wherein said bios is to control which of said plurality of operating systems is executed.

9. The system as in Claim 7, wherein:
said memory includes random access memory and read-only memory; and
said information handling system further includes a mass storage medium.

10. The system as in Claim 9, wherein:
said general operating system is stored in said mass storage medium; and
said appliance operating system is stored in said read-only memory.

11. The system as in Claim 7, further including one or more appliances to be coupled to said at least one communications interface.

12. The system as in Claim 11, wherein said one or more appliances are to be coupled to said communications interface via a network.

13. The system as in Claim 7, wherein said one or more appliances are media handling systems.

14. The system as in Claim 13, wherein said one or more media handling systems include at least one of an audio device and a visual device.

15. The system as in Claim 7, wherein said communications interface is a wireless interface.

16. The system as in Claim 7, wherein said communications interface is an electrical interface.

17. The system as in Claim 7, wherein a resource conflict check is performed when said operating systems are executed.

18. A computer readable medium tangibly embodying a plurality of instructions, said plurality of instructions including:

instructions to implement an appliance operating system on a general purpose information handling system;

said information handling system to perform general information handling tasks using a general using a general operating system;

said appliance operating system to control at least one appliance, wherein said appliance operating system is independent of said general operating system.

19. The computer readable medium as in Claim 18, wherein said plurality of instructions further includes instructions to control which of said operating systems is executed.

20. The computer readable medium as in Claim 18, wherein execution of said general operating system is terminated before switching to said appliance operating system.

21. The computer readable medium as in Claim 18, wherein execution of said appliance operating system is terminated before switching to said general operating system.

22. The computer readable medium as in Claim 18, wherein said general operating system and said appliance operating system are executed concurrently.

23. The computer readable medium as in Claim 18, wherein said at least one appliance is a media handling system.

24. The computer readable medium as in Claim 23, wherein said at least one media handling system includes at least one of an audio device and a visual device.

25. The computer readable medium as in Claim 18, wherein said plurality of instructions further includes instructions to check for resource conflicts.

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